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FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES

Brief Presented to
The Honourable Harvie Andre
Minister Responsible for the Canada Post Corporation

September 18, 1989

BACKGROUND

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities represents over 550 municipalities and 15 provincial/territorial municipal associations across Canada. The FCM brings municipal interests to the attention of the Government of Canada on issues ranging from transportation, to economic development to the arts.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities recognizes the need to update Canada's postal services to accommodate our growing urban population in a cost-effective manner. Over the last ten months, the FCM has held three meetings with Canada Post officials to discuss municipal concerns regarding the restructuring of Canada Post's services. Thirteen concerns were identified and most are in the process of being rectified. These issues dealt primarily with the technical operations of Canada Post's delivery service.

The FCM recognizes the need for a third-party review of the service and delivery performance of Canada Post and endorses the appointment of the Postal Services Review Board.

POLICY CONCERNS

As the voice of municipal interests across Canada, the FCM brings the following policy issues to your attention:

1. Municipal Representation on the Postal Service Review Board

In the 1988 discussion paper, "Third-Party Review of Canada Post Corporation's Rates and Services", it was recognized that: "In recent years, Canadians have shown increasing interest in the prices charged and services offered by Canada Post(sic)." As the order of government most accessible to consumers, municipal governments are on the front line as citizens voice their concerns regarding existing services and postal rate increases.

The Postal Service Review Board's mandate allows it to examine rates and services as established by the Canada Post Corporation. Service considerations focus on access, the "where" and "when" of postal service. It includes the location and hours of operation of postal retail outlets and

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the location of mailboxes. Delivery considerations include policies on the "how" of postal service, that is, home delivery, supermailboxes and lockboxes. The proper conduct of these services necessarily impacts upon municipal jurisdiction. As the national body representing municipal concerns to the federal government, the FCM is in a position to contribute experience to the Postal Service Review Board in dealing with public concerns on postal services, as well as an appreciation of the technical requirements for providing postal services throughout municipalities across Canada.

We believe the FCM can be an asset to the Postal Service Review Board in their efforts to provide advice and guidance to Canada Post and the Government of Canada.

Recommendation

We recommend the appointment of part-time board members who could be FCM representatives from across Canada. These part-time members would sit in on hearings and meetings dealing with postal concerns in their region of the country.

2. Expand Network of Postal Service Customer Councils

There is currently one Postal Service Customer Council in each of the nine divisions of Canada Post providing the Postal Service Review Board with a representative viewpoint through which to resolve customer concerns and problems. The number of Postal Service Customer Councils conform to the present organizational structure of Canada Post. However, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities believes only nine Postal Service Customer Councils cannot adequately service all Canadians due to the vastness of our country and the diversity of the postal problems.

Recommendation

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities recommends the network of Postal Service Customer Councils be expanded so that there is at least one Postal Service Customer Council in each province and territory in Canada.

3. The Impact of the Closure of Postal Stations on the Social Fabric of Rural Municipalities

The FCM recognizes and endorses the goal of Canada Post to provide an efficient and cost-effective postal service for the citizens of Canada. However, we believe we cannot overlook the important role in the community that many post offices play, particularly in smaller communities where the post office is often considered the community centre. The

FCM believes that in some rural centres the closure of a post office can have serious implications on that community's social fabric.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Canada Post consider the implications on the social fabric of the community when reviewing its services to a rural community.

4. Postal Services Review Board Hearings to be Held in Northern Communities

Although the majority of Canada Post's customers reside in the urban centres of Canada, it is important that all Canadians be allowed reasonable access to the hearings and meetings of the Postal Service Review Board. With the relatively long distances involved and the high cost of travel from our northern communities, it is virtually impossible for most of these citizens to attend these hearings. The Federation of Canadian Municipalities believes that expanded Postal Service Customer Councils, together with part-time board members from various regions of Canada, can provide the mechanism for holding Postal Service Review Board hearings in these remote areas of Canada.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Postal Service Review Board include Canada's northern regions in their regular schedule of hearings across the country.

CONCLUSION

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities is committed to maintaining proper channels of communications with the Canada Post Corporation in order to ensure an orderly and satisfactory delivery of mail within our communities.